# Battle Scars

The sniper attack bullet wound, to Robert's left leg, was severe.

*"They normally would have taken my leg off…but thank God for (Dr. Cummings). He was from Denver. (He told me my leg) was pretty well screwed up. They hit you in the right place to really mess your leg up."*

An enemy round had entered his hip and exited above his knee; basically, running the length of his femur. Dr. Cummings was able to replace the bone and still save muscle and nerves.

*"It's all bionic from here to way down there…and I'm still walkin!"*

During his 3 months of convalescence at the hospital, they also had to tend to his broken jaw, replace a portion of his colon, manage the near loss of his frostbitten toes, and perform urological magic to allow him to keep his ability to father children. But doctors can only do so much. Drugs were used to energize or settle the soldier as quickly as possible.

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From an article titled, "Getting Blitzed", MilitaryHistoryNow.com 8 May 2018

"By 1942 Benzedrine tablets (popularly known as "bennies") were added to emergency kits for American bomber crews and in 1943 the practice was extended to the infantry. About 15 percent of U.S. soldiers regularly took the stimulant. In fact, the Pentagon issued at least 250 million Benzedrine pills to the troops, yet the total number might be as high as 500 million."

"The Americans continued to boost their troops with amphetamine in the Korean War where administration of dextroamphetamine became commonplace."

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The psychological sciences were also employed to ensure Uncle Sam got the most from his soldiers.

From "The Independent Journal" 20 Jun 1953, a colonel from the Army Reserve; Dr. David G. Schmidt; discussed "New Developments in Psychiatry in the Army."

"Dr. Schmidt said…a third of the men called to service were rejected for neuro- psychiatric reasons, but through new and more extensive treatment and preventive measures, the rate of rejection has been cut to only 8 to 10 percent."

"He said each training division has a mental health center to care for potential mental causalities, and men are trained to expect and take responsibilities."

"In war areas, mental casualties from battle are treated as near the front as possible, preventing patients from developing a "hospital attitude." Dr. Schmidt said 9 out of 10 such patients in Korea have been returned to satisfactory combat duty."

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After the 279th Army Hospital did all they could for SFC Vallejos, he was assigned to Camp Nara for further rehabilitation. Robert still had panic attacks, shakes and nightmares. He was required to see a psychiatrist to help 'straighten him out'. After one of their appointments, Vallejos was given a pink/black capsule to help settle his nerves.

*"I had (just) taken that pink/black pill; I don't even know what the hell that crap was. It wasn't a 'mickey' cause I can remember I wasn't drunk or dazed or anything…it was like (I was) in a fog. It was a real weird feeling. I don't think it was that pill I took, cause I had taken some prior to that…ta kind of calm me. I was (shaking pretty bad) and that (pill) was part of the rehab I was getting…and was almost ready to go back to the front. Rehab was to get me calmed down. Enough to where I could go back on line and start killin people again. That's what it was all about."*

But after this appointment, several days passed he could not account for. When he comes too, he's in Camp Nara's jail, awaiting trial.

*"What the hell am I doing in here?"*

One of the NCO's he knew answered, *'you went AWOL.'*

*"What?!, I've been framed, I don't want this shit, what's going on?"*

*'No, you really did.'*

*"God Damn, I don't believe I did; where did they find me?"*

*'You were walking down the street in the middle of the night. You've been gone 3 days.'*

It wasn't on one of Camp Nara's streets where Robert was found. It was 25 miles away in Osaka, Japan. He had no money on him, and he couldn't have walked, since the highway was patrolled by military police.

*"I don't remember…and as soon as I said that, all of a sudden it clicked in my head…I was in this room, and I was talkin to this kind of chubby Japanese guy. (He) had on a real nice suit. (He paid) for a real nice room and meal…and a woman if I wanted one. I never talked to anybody after he left. I slept near all the time. I had a lot of flashbacks. Tore the room all to hell cause it's nothing but paper and real skinny wood. That's all I could remember."*

Still, SFC Vallejos found himself before a Court Marshall review, in 1951.

*"I went AWOL?! Jesus Christ, I couldn't accept it. But they couldn't all be lyin. Everybody was tellin me the same thing. So, when the trial came up and they asked me how do I plead, I said – guilty, as far as I know. "*

*"The lawyer I had said, 'You know, I could of gotten you off of that real easy. You have a good record.' I said, 'Well sir, if I really did go AWOL…I'll do the time for the crime.' He said, 'You're an honorable man.' Then he left."*

*"It's history as far as I'm concerned. There's a lot I knows not on my records, and a lot of it is a lie. It's classified information. My records are still classified."*

Vallejos did a lot of things for 25th Headquarters they would not want the public to be aware of. Hence it was difficult for Robert to even <u>prove</u> he had been to Korea at all! His regular personnel file stopped at Japan, then went up in flames in St. Louis in 1973. However, I did locate a hospital file card, which showed Robert had been injured in Korea, and de-classified orders proving Robert had been assigned to the 89th Med. Tank Battalion. (From Korean War Project 25ID-006905 and 25ID-001501).

( Personal Input )

When I asked Robert when he lost his rank, he was adamant it occurred after he returned to the states; when he was a training instructor at Fort Ord, CA. He blamed his parents' never-ending onslaught of hate mail to Uncle Sam, for taking their only son from them.

However, I located a flight manifest dated 21 Sept 1951 where *<u>Private</u>* Robert G. Vallejos flew from Haneda AB, Japan to McCord AFB, Tacoma, WA.

Another comment Robert made to me, I did not record on tape was this: *<u>'A smart, intelligent Japanese lady loved me…but committed suicide, because of me.'</u>*

I wondered if the court martial involved more than just being AWOL…..

( End Input )

*"The mind is a real weird thing; and this (can) happen to (any)body; the mind completely blocks everything out and they don't even know who the hell they are. It's like when a computer crashes; it's too damn much to deal with; and I think that's what happened! But I still don't know <u>what</u> happened. I don't know and I'm not going to worry about it, cause I paid the price and that was it."*